Tiptoes

the Mischievous Kitten

Most children will be delighted with this short story about a very naughty kitten who is always getting into trouble and mischief.

Tiptoes has many very exciting adventures, and the young reader will be fascinated at the unfolding of the story, and its conclusion on a happier note.

Series 497

Tiptoes the Mischievous Kitten

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TIPTOES, THE MISCHIEVOUS KITTEN.

The first time Tiptoes saw her new home was when she peeped out of Mr. Moffatt's pocket, as he opened the garden gate. She wriggled until she had one ear and one eye free, and this is what she saw.

The gate itself was painted green, and at the end of the garden path there was a house with green and white curtains at the windows. There was a garden all round it, with a great many flowers growing in very tidy flower beds. There were roses and pinks and marigolds, and poppies and red

hot pokers, and many others. At the side of the house there was a smooth green lawn, and here the Moffatt's baby lay kicking on a rug, and Mrs. Moffatt sat sewing in a garden chair.

Mr. Moffatt walked across the grass to his wife. "I've brought a present for our baby," he said, and he lifted Tiptoes out of his pocket and put her on the rug with the baby. "Ooh, Oooh," gurgled the baby, making a grab which Tiptoes just managed to dodge.

"Oh, the pet," Mrs. Moffatt said, and she picked up the kitten and showed the baby how to stroke her.

"H'm," Tiptoes said to herself, "I must take care not to go too near to that baby, unless his mother is there too!"

Tiptoes felt a little strange, for she had only just left her mother, brother and sister, but when she was taken into the house with the green and white curtains Tiptoes took a careful look round, and decided she was going to like her new home.

She walked slowly round the house, examining everything. First she visited the kitchen, and looked at the shining hearth, and the bright fire. "This will be good on cold days," Tiptoes said to herself.

She went into the sitting room and saw the 'comfy' chairs with nice soft cushions on them — "Nice when I'm sleepy," she thought — and then started off upstairs, one step at a time, and walked into the nursery. She stared at the baby's toys and patted a woolly dog on the cheek, wondering why he didn't growl at her, and after that Tiptoes walked into Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt's bedroom, where she promised herself some good games with the long fringe on the bedspread.

When she felt she had seen all there was to see she went carefully downstairs again, where she found a blue saucer full of milk waiting for her.

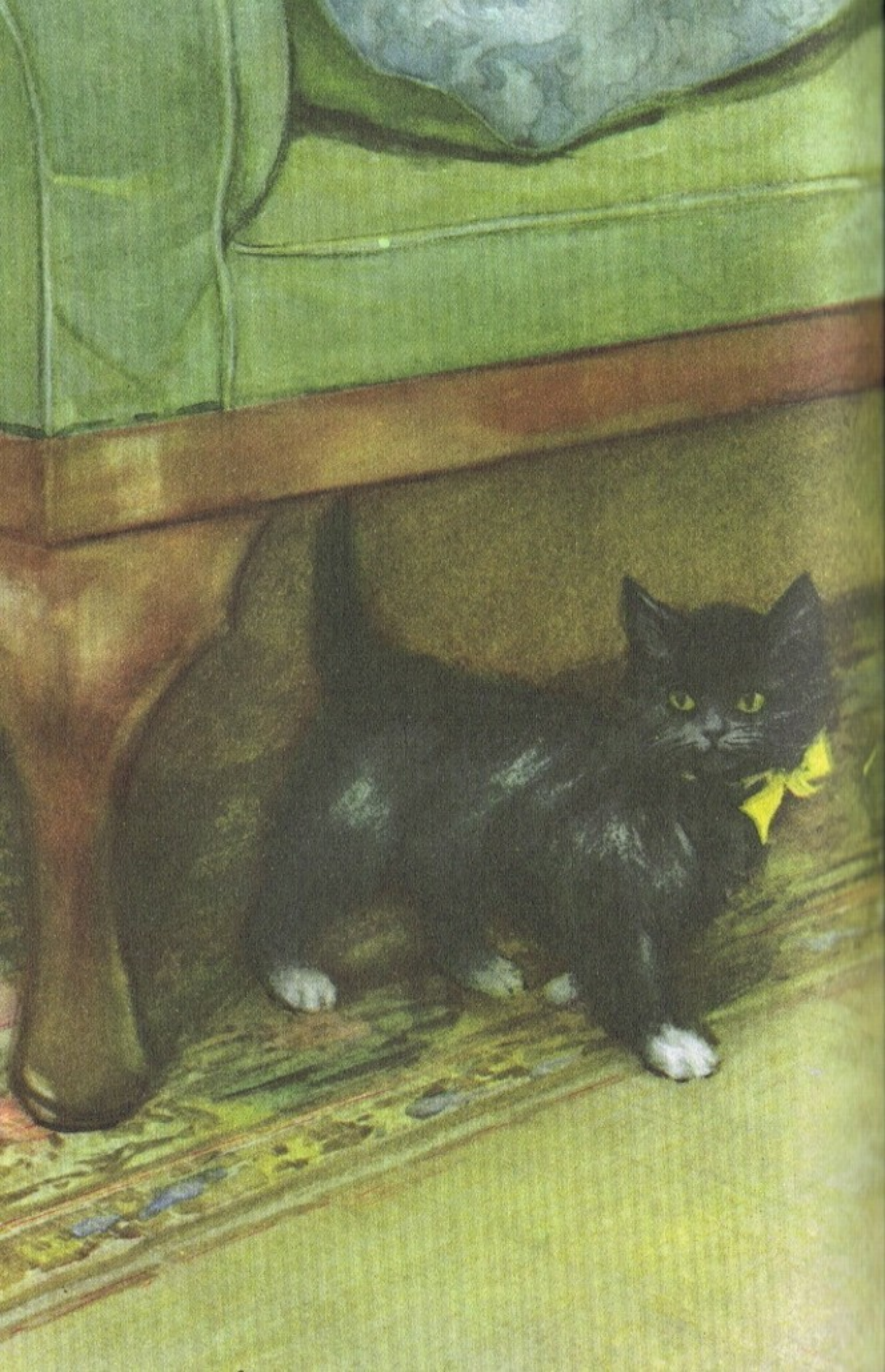
"Yes," Tiptoes said in a purry whisper, when she had finished her milk and was polishing her whiskers, "Yes, I'm going to like being here." And she jumped up to a rocking chair with a cushion on it, and went to sleep.

Tiptoes was quite a small kitten. She was black all over, except for the tips of her four little feet, and they were white.

She had a tail that generally stood straight up, so that one longed to fasten a little flag to it; and a pair of big eyes that managed to look innocent and solemn even when she was in her most mischievous mood.

For Tiptoes *was* mischievous, as Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt soon found out. At first they forgave her every time because she was so young and so tiny.

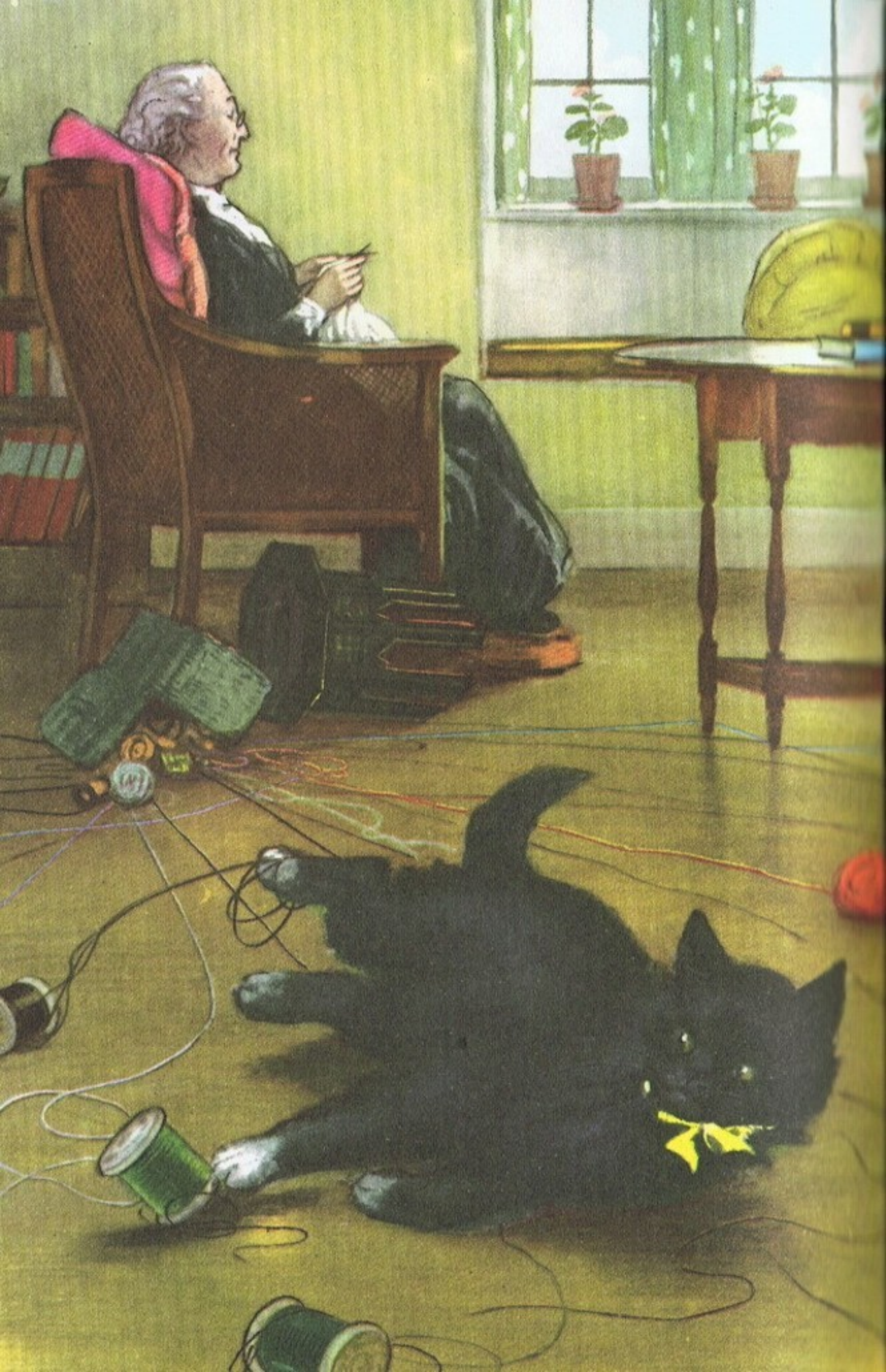
"Look!" Mrs. Moffatt would say, "she is very small, she can walk right under the sofa and only touch it with her funny little tail. Yes, she's only a baby, we must forgive her this time."



Tiptoes heard her and said to herself, "Yes, I'm only very young, I dare say I shall have more sense when I grow older."

But, as she grew older, instead of getting any better, she really grew naughtier and naughtier. She walked all over the wet green paint after Mr. Moffatt had painted the garden seat, then jumped on to the perambulator, and left little green foot-marks all over the sleeping baby's clothes and his nice clean pillow and cover.

When Mrs. Moffatt's Grannie came to stay, Tiptoes upset her work basket; and while the old lady, who was as deaf as a post, calmly went on with her knitting, Tiptoes chased the reels of cotton and the balls of embroidery silk about the room, and round the legs of the tables and chairs until the floor looked like one great spider's web, with Grannie as the spider, and Tiptoes as the fly.



Then, the very next day, she tumbled headlong into a bowl of starch that Mrs. Moffatt had left for a moment while she went to see what the postman had brought. After upsetting the bowl and splashing the starch in every direction, Tiptoes rushed out of the house and sat in the sun wondering why she wasn't a good little kitten.

Of course her fur dried in little stiff points, and she found it rather difficult to move at all.

Mrs. Moffatt laughed until she cried when she saw her, and laughed again later on when she told Mr. Moffatt about the starched kitten ; but at the time, as soon as she had dried her eyes, she scolded Tiptoes for making such a mess with the starch and gave her a real bath. Tiptoes hated it, and vowed she would never mistake starch for milk again.

Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt and the baby were all very fond of Tiptoes. She had as much milk as she wanted, and a basket to sleep in, and very often a ribbon round her neck, but as she got into more and more mischief they began to wonder whether they could keep her.

"Yes, I know, my dear," Mr. Moffatt said to his wife after Tiptoes had spilt ink all over the papers on his desk — "Yes, I know we should miss her very much, but I really don't know how we can keep her if she goes on like this."

Tiptoes went quietly out of the room and into the garden where she hid herself among the hollyhocks.

"Dear, dear, I must really be more careful," she murmured, "for it would be dreadful to be sent away from here."

"It is a most comfortable home, and my master and mistress are very kind. I'm even getting quite fond of the baby now. I'm growing much bigger, and really must be more sensible and not do such silly things." Then she jumped through the window and into the sitting room, where she tried to walk underneath the sofa. Yes, the tips of her ears touched it now, she really was growing up.

For a week or two Tiptoes tried very hard to be good, and certainly she didn't get into as much trouble as usual. "You see!" she said to herself, "I can be good when I try!"

But she spoke too soon, for suddenly everything went wrong, and she became worse and worse, and was always being scolded for something.

"Oh, Tiptoes!" Mrs. Moffatt said one morning. "Here you are, almost a grown-up cat, and yet you've no more sense than to dash after a fly and knock my lovely bowl of roses off the bookcase!" Then she flapped the duster, with which she was mopping up the water, at the little cat. "You know we can't possibly keep you, you do something silly every day!"

Tiptoes hid herself in the little greenhouse this time, and made up her mind to be good. "Oh dear," she said to herself, "I wish my mother had spanked me more often."

Hardly a week had gone by before she was in trouble again. Mrs. Moffatt went into the spare room to do a very difficult thing. She was going to make a feather bed into pillows. She put on a big apron, and tied her hair up in a duster. She closed the windows and the door, so that there should be no draught, and then she put the feather bed on the floor, with a large dust sheet underneath it.

She made a cut right down the middle of it, and folded the pieces back, leaving a beautifully soft mass of tiny feathers and down.

"I must be very careful," Mrs. Moffatt said to herself. "I must move about as little as I can, or these feathers will fly about and everything in the room will be covered with them."

She spread the new pillow cases out and started to fill them.

Just at that moment she heard the baby begin to cry, and she knew she must go into the nursery and find out what was the matter.

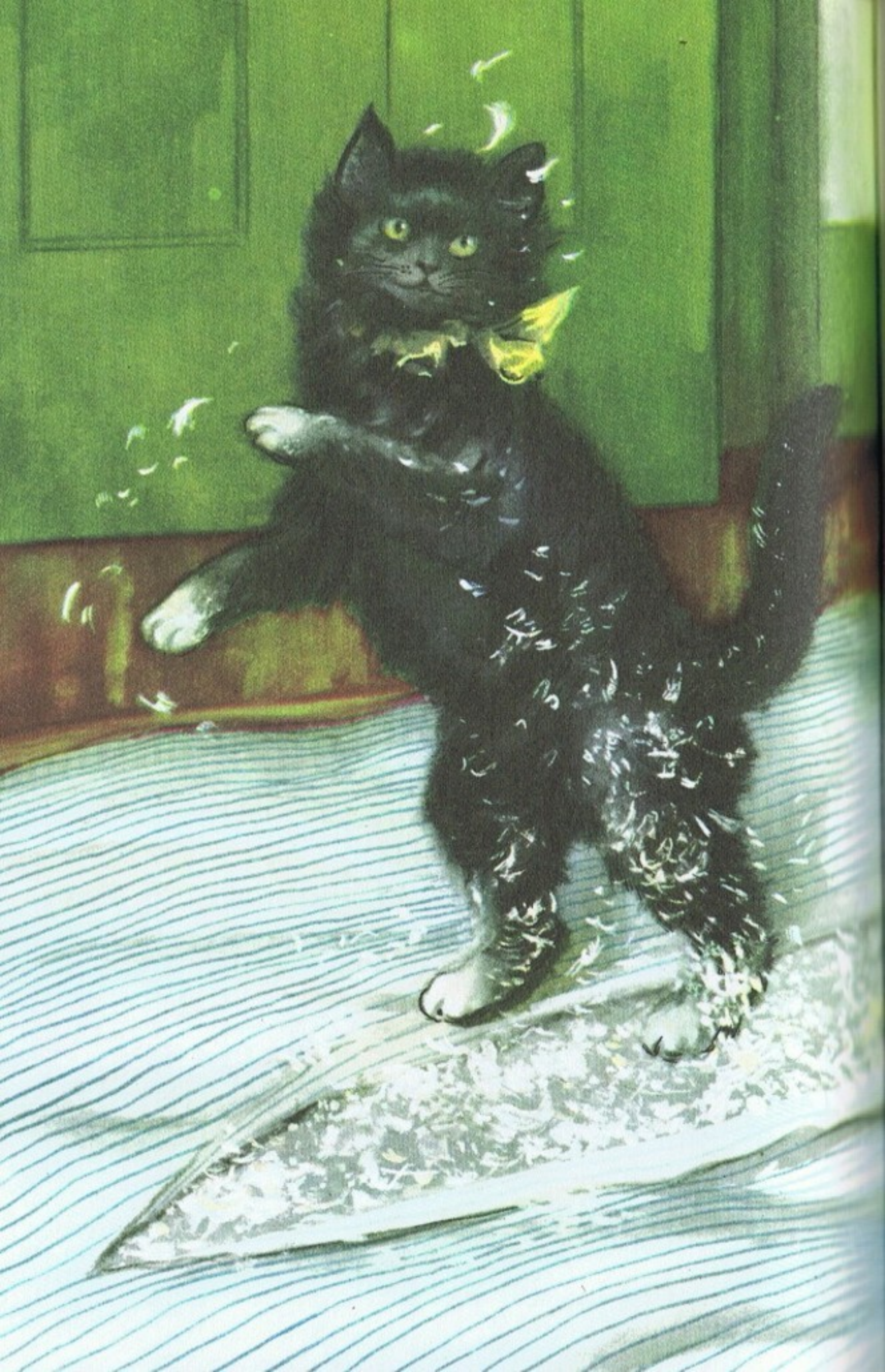
She took care to close the door of the spare room after her, but as the catch was rather loose the door swung open again.

Just then, of course, Tiptoes came silently up the stairs. She was looking for her mistress; she wanted some milk. She went to the spare room door, and looked round it. No, Mrs. Moffatt wasn't there. Tiptoes had just decided to look into the nursery, when she saw something move. It was a tiny feather, disturbed by the slight draught. She watched it for a moment, and then walked daintily over to it. She patted it with her paw, it moved again, and several others moved with it.

"Nice," thought Tiptoes. "We'll have a few more!" and she stirred the edge of the mass of feathers with her front paws. Soon there were many feathers and bits of down floating about in the air, and as Tiptoes stood on her back legs, and tried to hit them with her front ones, more and more flew up.

"More, more!" she squeaked excitedly, and she jumped right into the middle of the feather bed. She wasn't at all prepared for what happened.

The fluff and the feathers got into her mouth and throat and almost choked her, and into her eyes so that she was very nearly blinded.



She could hardly breathe, and she couldn't see at all. This was terrible. She struggled and fought, trying to get away from the whirling feathers, but the more she tried the deeper she sank. Feathers flew everywhere—they floated up to the ceiling, out of the door, and down the stairs, and on to the top of all the furniture—the air was thick with them. Tiptoes coughed and sneezed and rolled and spluttered, and when Mrs. Moffatt came back into the room she saw a mist of spinning feathers and a small object, completely covered in white fluff, struggling and fighting in the midst of a great cloud of them.

"Oh! Oh! You naughty, naughty cat. What have you done?" she cried. "Oh dear, oh dear, what a terrible mess. You naughty Tiptoes, I won't keep you any longer, you must go away. And this time I mean it." She grabbed Tiptoes, brushed off some of the feathers, rolled her in an apron, and took her downstairs into the garden, where she left her.

Tiptoes rolled on the grass and rubbed against the wall and pushed herself among the bushes, in her efforts to get rid of the feathers with which she was covered.

Then she sat down to think. Her mistress had said she was to go. And she had said she meant it. What a silly cat she was. Yes, it was true, she wasn't a kitten any longer. She raced across the lawn and jumped in through the sitting room window. A grown-up cat, she couldn't even get under the sofa without crawling on her tummy. Just then she heard voices in the study, so she crept to the door and peeped through the crack.

Mrs. Moffatt was drying her eyes on Mr. Moffatt's handkerchief. " You n-never saw such a mess in your l-life." she said in a shaky voice.

"I'll come and help you clear it up," Mr. Moffatt said. And then Tiptoes heard him say — "I can't let you be bothered like this, you have all you can do to look after the baby and the house. Tiptoes is more trouble than both of them put together. She must go, my dear, there's no doubt about it at all. I will look out for a good home for her."

"Oh dear, is it really true?" Tiptoes gasped. "I won't be given away!" and she ran out of the house, through the garden, and away into the woods beyond. She found a hollow tree full of dead leaves, and there she curled herself up.

"I will stay here until I am good," she said, "and then I'll go back and see whether they will let me live with them again or not."

Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt couldn't think what had happened to Tiptoes. They had decided not to keep her any longer, but they didn't want her to be lost. They hunted through the house and out in the garden, and they asked all their neighbours whether they had seen Tiptoes. They missed her very much, and after a little while wondered how they had ever thought of giving her away.

"I wish she would come back," Mrs. Moffatt said. "Yes, so do I," replied her husband.

After some time, Tiptoes did come back. Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt had such a surprise one morning when they came downstairs, with the baby, and found Tiptoes in the kitchen.

There, in her basket was Tiptoes, and with her were three little kittens. She had got in through the pantry window and had carried her babies in one by one.

The baby laughed and Mrs. Moffatt sat down on the floor by the basket.

"Oh Tiptoes," she said. "How glad I am to see you. You really have grown-up at last, haven't you?" And to her husband she said "Tiptoes won't be mischievous any more, dear, she is a grown-up cat now!"

"Trouble indeed!" Tiptoes purred, as she rubbed her head against Mrs. Moffatt's hand, and looked at the saucer of milk Mr. Moffatt was pouring out for her—"Trouble indeed! As if the mother of a family like mine had any time to be mischievous and troublesome."

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